

Interactive comment on “Cenozoic deformation in the Tauern Window (Eastern Alps, Austria) constrained by in-situ Th-Pb dating of fissure monazite” by Emmanuelle Ricchi et al.

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Received and published: 15 December 2019

General comments

The manuscript “Cenozoic deformation in the Tauern Window (Eastern Alps, Austria) constrained by in-situ Th-Pb dating of fissure monazite” by E. Ricchi et al. contains a rather large number of new data that add to extensive thermochronological data sets available for the Tauern Window. The new data are of broad interest both from a regional geological and from a methodological viewpoint because by comparing their new data set with apatite and zircon fission track and $^{40}\text{Ar}/^{39}\text{Ar}$ data from the literature, the authors illustrate convincingly the potential and limitations of assessing the age of

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tectonism by monazite dating. The manuscript meets the quality criteria for publication in *Solid Earth*, however, I have a number of suggestions for improvement below that altogether require moderate revisions of the manuscript. I should also say that I read the comments of the other reviewer and agree with his specific comments, so in the following I will not dwell on the analytical procedures (e.g. BSE imaging and SIMS reduction) but concentrate on the regional geological aspects.

Chapters 4.1 and 5.1: I have some difficulties to understand if or how the authors connect different structures (i.e. C1, C2, and C3 in Fig. 2) to the age data for which also a red-green-blue colour scheme is used (Fig. 7). Is the colour coding for C1, C2, and C3 in Fig. 2 the same as in Fig. 7? In other words, are C1 fissures supposed to have formed at 22-19 Ma, C2 at 19-15 Ma and C3 at 13-8 Ma? If so, these links should be explicitly mentioned in chapter 5.1. Please mention also in chapter 4.1 to which generation of fissures PFIT1 belongs.

Figures: In basically all of the figures the labelling is too small, especially if the figures are given as poor-quality raster (like in the file that this review is based on) and not vector graphics.

Specific comments

Lines 105-108, MöF and MVF: I do not understand in how far the distinction between the Möll valley fault (MVF) and the Mölltal fault (MöF) is justified. The MVF is not mapped in the references cited in the caption of Fig. 1, except for Schneider et al. (2013) where, however, the fault itself is not marked but only a half-arrow indicating dextral shear sense is given. If the authors insist on the existence of an MVF, I see no reason why it should not be the same structure as the MöF.

Lines 105-108, Katschberg fault: The northern, E-W trending stretch of the KSZS is dextral, not sinistral. Somewhat northeast of and parallel to the northwestern stretch of the MöF in Fig. 1, there is a sinistral shear zone that is also part of the Katschberg fault.

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Lines 116-118: Folding alone cannot have caused significant exhumation; the idea of Schmid et al. (2013) is that exhumation was achieved by extrusion of the HP unit that went together with folding.

Lines 118-120: "... this exhumation episode ..." logically refers to D3. However, breakoff of the European slab was linked to D4 by Schmid et al. (2013).

Lines 127, 128: What is "isochron corrected Rb-Sr dating"?

Lines 186-193 (chapter 4 Results): No results but rather general informations about fissure and cleft formation are given here. With respect to line 191, more complex (sigmoidal) shapes may also result from non-coaxial progressive deformation. In that case, also the orientation with respect to the foliation and lineation changes progressively.

Lines 202-203: The sigmoidal shape of C2 fissures should indicate a shear sense. It would be good to give information about the shear sense of strike-slip faulting here.

Lines 210-211: It is safer to write here "This would indicate a similar direction of extension for the development ..."

Lines 212-218: Since C1 and C2 are perpendicular to stretching lineations L1 and L2 that are parallel to each other (Fig. 2c), I do not understand how it is possible to distinguish the two fissure generations based on their orientation.

Lines 220, 222: According to Fig. 2b&c, C3 is not perpendicular to C1 and C2 and L3 is not down-dip.

Lines 406-407: I find it a bit misleading to say the faults were active at 21, 17 and 12 Ma because the time ranges for the three phases of fissure formation given just before indicate almost continuous monazite growth between 22 and 8 Ma.

Lines 407-410: The fission track age distribution in Fig. 7c is strictly speaking not U-shaped, but forms a dome or inverse U. More importantly, the relatively young fission track ages are from the margins of the Tauern dome from where the authors have not

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dated monazite samples. Therefore, I find also the conclusion that “monazite crystallization ages do not show the U-shaped distribution as cooling ages“ misleading. A more valid conclusion would be in my opinion that the latest stages of monazite crystallisation happened at temperatures that are between apatite and fission track “closure” temperatures.

Fig. 1: There is apparently no interference between the ZWD and the IsF. This is probably a result of compiling different maps and looks very peculiar.

Technical corrections

Line 55: “... fissures form.”

Line 64: “... fluid that fills ...” or “... fluids that fill ...”

Line 95: “... (1-25) ...”

Lines 104, 648: “... Ahrntal shear zone ...”

Line 120: I suggest to write “This was followed by an inversion of subduction polarity ...” because it is clearer than “... slab dynamics ...”

Line 192: “... studies ...”

Line 197: I suggest to add “5” behind “sample locality” because then the place is much easier to find in Fig. 1

Line 210: “... in figure 2c ...”

Line 215: “... fold axes ...”

Line 221: I suggest to replace “displays” with “is related to”

Lines 222, 223, 225: I suggest to replace “oriented” with “striking”

Line 229: “... it shows ...”

Line 240: “In a few cases the dates for specific monazite domains ...”

Line 247: "... which delimits the TW to the west ..."

Line 273: "... starts to grow (phase 1, red symbols in Fig. 7) ..."

Line 290: "... the peak activity of which ..."

Line 307: Replace "sinistral" with "dextral"

Line 322: "... was active ..."

Line 344: I suggest to replace "occurred" with "started"

Line 366: I suggest to replace "Whereas" with "By contrast,"

Line 374: "... monazites ..."

Line 388: Delete "decreases"

Lines 395-396: "... during the Miocene."

Line 404: "... associated with ..."

Lines 444, 452, 457, 533, 585, 587, 634: Please add names of journal or book

Lines 492, 495: Please check for special characters

Legend of Fig 1.: "Periadriatic"

Lines 637-639: Below the legend of Fig. 1, but not in the figure caption, Scharf et al. (2013) is cited as a source for the map.

Lines 648-649: "... Deferegggen ... Mur-Mürz ..." (these are spelled incorrectly also in Schneider et al. 2013)

Line 694: "... sample locations ..."

Line 689: "... are presented ..."

Line 695: "DD' NE-SW cross section across the BNF"

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Line 704: “Zircon and apatite fission track ages ...”

Figure 7: Please integrate the labelling at the bottom of Fig. 7 (“(1) Early record ... oblique-slip”) into the figure caption

Text at the bottom of Table 2: “Blanckenburg”

Supplementary information (SI), description of INN1: “... between 7265-21,420 and ...” – likewise for descriptions of MAYR4, BURG2, SCHE1, SALZ18, ORT1

SI, description of ZE1: “ZE1 ... can be subdivided in three domains (ZE1-A, -B, and -C) ...”

SI, description of SCHE1: “... Table 5), thus assuming ...”

SI, description of NOWA3: “... displays three ...”

SI, description of GART3: “...GART3-C composition is strongly clustered ...”

SI, description of STEI2: “... between 2676-12,353 and 131-407 ppm ...”

Interactive comment on Solid Earth Discuss., <https://doi.org/10.5194/se-2019-162>, 2019.

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